

Suggested Remarks
Acting USAID Mission Director
Michael C. Trott
Turn over Ceremony
Siasi Port Improvement
North Laud Boat Landing
June 9, 2006

Honorable Secretary Jesus G. Dureza,
Honorable Governor Benjamin T. Loong,
Honorable Mayor Wilson S. Anni,
General Manager Alejandre Ampatuan (or
representative),
Colleagues from USAID and the GEM Program,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Asalamu Alaikum:

I am very pleased to be here today for the
inauguration of the expanded and upgraded
Siasi Port and the North Laud Boat Landing.
With the completion of the Siasi Port
improvements, including a Roll-on Roll-off
ramp, the port now becomes a key stop on the
"Strong Republic Nautical Highway of the
Philippines".

I hope that the improved port and boat landing facilities will stimulate greater economic activity through reduced transport costs, expanded markets, and better access to social services.

The U.S. Government understands the critical importance of sound infrastructure in generating economic growth, and we also appreciate the need to expand opportunities to sustain peace in this region. This is why the U.S. Government, through USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao, or GEM Program, and in partnership with the Government of the Philippines, is constructing about 40 mid-scale infrastructure projects and 800 community

infrastructure projects throughout Mindanao and Sulu.

The American people are also supporting a wide range of other projects here in Sulu, including: renewable energy projects, which provides electricity to families in remote barangays; education projects; and health services improvement activities.

While we know that ultimate responsibility for economic progress and peace in this region rests with local leaders and the people themselves, we are pleased to be able to help those who are committed to peace in Mindanao, and who have the vision to see a brighter tomorrow.

On behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people, I would like to thank you, Secretary Dureza, Governor Loong, and you, Mayor Anni, for your collaboration and warm hospitality. Thank you also to the Regional Port Management Authority for its support of the Siasi Port project.

Mabuhay tayong lahat!